

WHAT IS CLAIMED IS:

1. A story-telling doll comprising:
 - (a) a doll body;
 - (b) a processing system including at least one digital processor, said processing system being contained within said body;
 - (c) a programmable data storage device associated with said processing system and contained within said body;
 - (d) an audio output device associated with said processing system and contained within said body;
 - (e) at least one user-operable switch manually operable by manipulation of at least one region of said body, said at least one switch being operative to provide an input signal to said processing system; and
 - (f) a communications unit associated with said processing system and contained within said body, said communications unit being configured to operate under control of said processing unit in response to said input signal to:
 - (i) initiate a data communications link via a general purpose communications network with a remote content provider source,
 - (ii) transmit to the remote content provider a request for download of at least one data file including audio content, and

(iii) receive the at least one data file including audio content from the remote content provider, wherein said processor system is operative to save the at least one data file in said storage device and subsequently to play said audio content read from said at least one data file via said audio output device.

2. The story-telling doll of claim 1, wherein said communications unit includes a modem configured for initiating a data connection across a telephone network.

3. The story-telling doll of claim 2, wherein said modem is a PSTN modem configured for initiating a data connection across a PSTN telephone network.

4. The story-telling doll of claim 2, wherein said modem is configured for initiating a data connection across a cellular telephone network.

5. The story-telling doll of claim 2, wherein said doll further includes a socket associated with said modem and configured for wired connection to the telephone network.

6. The story-telling doll of claim 1, wherein said processing system is further configured to:

- (a) receive via said communications unit information indicative of at least two options relating to data files available for download from the remote content provider;
- (b) generate via said audio output device an audio prompt indicative of said at least two options;
- (c) receive via said at least one switch a user response indicative of a selected option; and
- (d) transmit to the remote content provider a response indicative of the selected option.

7. The story-telling doll of claim 1, wherein said at least one user-operable switch includes a switch manually operable by manipulation of a limb of the doll body.

8. The story-telling doll of claim 1, wherein said at least one user-operable switch includes a switch manually operable by manipulation of a head of the doll body.

9. The story-telling doll of claim 1, wherein said at least one user-operable switch includes a switch manually operable by depressing a button associated with an external surface of the doll body.

10. The story-telling doll of claim 1, further comprising:

- (a) a rechargeable battery deployed within said doll body for powering at least said processor system, said rechargeable battery being electrically connected to a connector; and
 - (b) a charging unit deployed separate from said doll body and configured for mating with said connector so as to charge said rechargeable battery.
11. The story-telling doll of claim 10, wherein said connector further includes communication connections associated with said communications unit.
12. A story-telling doll system for providing repeatedly updated audio content for playing by a plurality of dolls, the system comprising:
- (a) a plurality of story-telling dolls according to claim 1, each of said dolls being configured to transmit an identification code; and
 - (b) a remote content provider system including:
 - (i) a communications subsystem associated with the general purpose communications network;
 - (ii) a database subsystem including a registry of doll identification codes and associated content definitions; and
 - (iii) a content management subsystem associated with said communications subsystem and said database subsystem, said content management subsystem storing data files of a

plurality of content types, said content management subsystem being responsive to said identification code to:

- (A) retrieve from said database subsystem a content definition associated with each received identification code, and
- (B) make available for download at least one data file having a content type corresponding to the retrieved content definition.

13. The system of claim 12, wherein said plurality of content types includes a first age-range category and a second age-range category.

14. The system of claim 12, wherein said plurality of content types includes a first language category and a second language category.

15. The system of claim 12, wherein said plurality of content types includes at least one special-interest group.